

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Bourne Urban District

For the Year 1920,

BY

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BOURNE

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BOURNE, APRIL 6TH, 1921.

To the Bourne Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

Acting on instructions from the Ministry of Health I have, as you will see, somewhat modified the arrangement of the Annual Report. It may be said to consist of repetitions, vain repetitions.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

(a) POPULATION.

The population of your District at the census of 1911 was 4,344, it is now computed by the Registrar General to be 4,926, and on this number the estimates of the Birth and Death rate for the year have been calculated. In my opinion the estimate is nearly 500 too large and will be proved so by the census to be taken this year.

(b) PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER.

The District may be roughly described as a parallelogram with length of about 5 miles lying due East to West and a breadth of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles North to South. Practically flat from North to South, there is a steady rise from the East from

about 10 feet above sea level to 90 feet at the Western boundary which is, or I should say was, an extensive belt of woodland. This woodland is, however, now being completely felled in common fate with almost every decent forest tree in your District and around it. No attempt at re-planting seems to be made and the prospect, to a lover of nature at any rate, is mournful.

With the exception of the township the District is sparsely populated and consists of arable and pasture land in about equal proportions, with a sub-soil of clay.

(c) SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The population is entirely dependant upon agriculture or industry allied to it, and since agriculture for the last few years has been flourishing its social conditions except for the lack of houses, have been satisfactory.

The Vital Statistics compare very closely with those of last year but are hardly satisfactory in comparison with those of England and Wales. The number of deaths was 63, which on the basis of a population of 4,926 gives an average of 12·7 per thousand to compare with the rate of 12·4 for the whole of England and Wales.

The epidemic of Measles and Whooping Cough was responsible for 8 deaths, and 5 were due to pulmonary Tuberculosis; Cancer was responsible for 5. Of the remainder 20 might be ascribed to the effects of age, 8 occurring between 70 and 80, 10 between 80 and 90, and 2 over 90—the oldest being 98.

Amongst infants under one year of age the mortality was 7, giving an average of 73 per 1,000 born, to compare with the figure of 80 per 1,000 for England and Wales; this is a great improvement on your previous record, the ten year average being 134 per 1,000.

There were 95 births registered during the year, giving an average of 19·3 per 1,000, which is a slight improvement on your last year's figures but does not compare so favourably with those of England and Wales where the birth-rate jumped from 18·5 in 1919 to 25·5 in 1920.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

(a) WATER.

Practically all your inhabitants get their water supply from artesian bores, either those of the Bourne Waterworks Company or from private bores; the water is very pure although somewhat hard owing to the limestone through which it comes.

(b) POLLUTION OF WATERCOURSES.

I have to repeat that the Bourne Eau is polluted in the Eastgate by a firm of fellmongers who use the stream for the purposes of their business but the pollution does not prejudicially affect any of your inhabitants.

(c) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The Sewers are "fearfully and wonderfully made" and convey sewage mixed with a very excessive flow of waste water to the filtration beds which, though large for the population they serve, are almost incapable of dealing in a satisfactory manner with such an enormous flow of dilute sewage. I have repeatedly called attention to the difficulties caused by this use of the sewers for the disposal of waste water from defective or disused bores but during the past year no action has been taken.

(d) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

With the abundant water facilities there is no reason why, in the township, there should be any other than water closets; there are however still too many privvies, and I am not aware of any conversions during the past year but as conditions return more to normal it is to be hoped your Council will be more insistent on the fulfilment of this necessary improvement. The number of w.c.'s is now about 500 and privvies about 370.

(e) SCAVENGING.

The system of house-to-house collection of refuse is now almost universal in the Town itself but there is a great

diversity as to the receptacles in which the refuse is placed for removal. I would urge your Council to take action against one or two who after warning still commit a distinct nuisance by exposing their refuse on the public street in uncovered receptacles.

(f) SANITARY INSPECTION OF DISTRICT.

Your Sanitary Inspector reports that the District has been systematically inspected during the year and that 50 cases of nuisance have been dealt with by him; the causes were:—defective drainage, accumulations of refuse, overflowing privvies, etc.; 5 of these were abated after statutory notice had been served and the remainder after informal notice.

(g) PREMISES AND OCCUPATION CONTROLLED BY BYELAWS OR REGULATIONS.

There are two businesses classed under the heading of offensive trades and these have been observed and found satisfactory. There are no Common Lodging Houses or underground sleeping rooms.

FOOD.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.

The milk consumed is wholly produced within your District; it has been sufficient in quantity and pure and wholesome; the Dairies and Cowsheds have been inspected and found on the whole clean and in good order. One or two instances were reported to me in which a difficulty arose in getting milk for young children but a note from me to the milk seller promptly ensured a supply.

(b) MEAT has been inspected but it has not been found necessary to condemn any, the slaughter houses were found clean and properly drained; the number of slaughter houses closed during the war was 4, and all have since been re-opened; there were in the District :

In 1914	In Jan., 1920	In Dec., 1920
8	4	8

(c) OTHER FOODS.

During the year the following list shews the quantity of tinned foodstuffs condemned and destroyed as unfit for consumption :

Tinned Beef	...	...	46
„ Fruits	...	...	41
„ Fish	...	...	52
„ Milk	...	...	4

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The number of cases of notifiable Infectious Disease was 11 and comprised

Scarlet Fever	...	...	3
Diphtheria	...	...	1
Typhoid Fever	...	...	1
Erysipelas	...	...	3
Pneumonia	...	...	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	2

All the cases of Scarlet Fever and that of Diphtheria were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

The case of Typhoid Fever was of moderate severity with well marked symptoms. The contagion was evidently acquired in the neighbourhood but the source could not be determined.

Of the two cases of Ophthalmic Neonatorum one was slight and taken in time and recovery was complete, but the other, a very virulent type, was not seen until irreparable mischief was done to both eyes.

There were also notified during the year 5 cases of Tuberculosis and 5 deaths were due to that disease which is undoubtedly more prevalent in your District now than formerly, in spite of the greater attention paid to it. One is inclined to doubt if the energy is not misdirected and to ask whether the efforts at cure by sanatorium treatment which, after all, can benefit but few, would not be more advantageously expended in protecting a far greater number by providing means of permanent isolation for the advanced cases which are the most serious source of danger and infection to the community.

Never in the thirty years that I have practised in your District have I known such a widespread epidemic of Measles and of Whooping Cough as raged during the months of April, May and June, resulting in the death of eight children. Possibly because these complaints are not notifiable parents consider that measures of isolation are unnecessary; it was quite a common occurrence during this epidemic to meet children coughing, whooping and vomiting in the public streets of the town. Parents perhaps do not realize how extremely serious these diseases are in the case of very young children; it should be their duty, during an epidemic, to watch their family most carefully for any sign of departure from health, such as symptoms of a cold or cough, and to separate the patient as far as possible from the rest and in particular to keep the baby, if there is one, well away from the suspected case, for it is the baby of about twelve months old who dies and who always has caught the complaint from another member of the household.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

I have already pointed out to your Council that there is in the District an absolute lack of any facility for the trained nursing of the women of the working classes and that even the untrained woman of some practical experience in Maternity work who could formerly be relied on to attend mothers in confinement is now practically non-existent.

I have also placed before you the details of the assistance which the Kesteven County Council is willing and wishful to provide for this purpose, but your Council seems disinclined to take any present action in the matter, even when adjacent villages such as Morton and Ilconby, and Rippingale are setting you the example. As your Medical Officer, I should deem it discreditable if the County Council were to exercise the power which it possesses of acting in this matter on its own initiative.

The Child Welfare Centre at the North Street Schoolroom has been doing excellent work on every alternate Thursday afternoon throughout the year, and the meetings have shown a very satisfactory increase in numbers.

HOUSING.

(a) GENERAL CONDITIONS.

There is a very considerable demand for houses in your District amongst both the working classes and the more well-to-do of your inhabitants.

Assuming the figures supplied by the Registrar General as to your population to be approximately correct, there is an increase of population of nearly 200 since last year and nearly 600 since the census of 1911. Since that census 34 houses have been built, of which 11 were cottages, and during the same period 13 cottages have been closed or pulled down. There will thus be an average of five persons per house, so that when you take into account the very considerable number of small villa residences in your Town which hold only two occupants and also the numerous cottages tenanted by two and sometimes only one old person, you will easily realize that there must be very many instances of over-crowding as indeed there are.

To meet this deficiency I have previously recommended 40 houses as the minimum needed to relieve the congestion and to allow of the closing of those tenements which, although unfit for habitation, are still occupied.

Your Council, under the Housing Act of 1919, originally proposed a scheme for the erection of 36 cottages but subsequently reduced it to a programme of 8. These were commenced about a year ago, and I can almost believe the first pair will be ready for occupation by Midsommer, but at the present rate of construction they will be mellowed by age before the fourth pair are completed!!

I can only make the suggestion, which I am sure that as men of business you will appreciate, that future payments on account to the contractor should be subject to discount, to compensate for the time your previous payments have remained unproductive to the ratepayers who are concerned.

(b) FITNESS OF HOUSES.

There is nothing to add to nor anything to retract from my last Report. Here it is :

“I do not think it would be any exaggeration to say that of the dwellings of the working classes in your District, quite one third fall short of modern sanitary requirements, and that of this third the half (=50) are what I described as in my Report for 1910 as ‘mud and studd dwellings or jerry-built brick hovels,’ and they can hardly be expected to have improved with age since then. Most of them are innocent of any provision against dampness except such as a more or less imperfect roof affords. With light and space abundant outside, they contrive by tiny windows and low ceilings to keep it there; combine this with lack of accommodation such as pantry room or stairway other than a ladder, top it up with a state of utter disrepair and the picture is complete.

“But to answer the question, how shall all this be remedied? is difficult indeed. Apart from all financial considerations or difficulty in obtaining material, there is, as the greatest obstacle, the inadequacy of the building industry, and until this is altered, to make plans is futile. Until the trades-union element can be shamed, if it has any sense of shame, out of its present selfish attitude and can be made to realize that to save National disaster Co-operation, and Co-operation in its widest sense alone will serve, and that whilst Capital must give to its utmost in rates and taxes of *its* asset which is Capital, so also must labour give to its utmost of *its* asset, work and opportunities for work, the utmost also.

“In the meantime your Council can but exercise to the full all the powers that you possess to veto any building operations save those on dwelling houses alone.”

My only commentary will be on the last paragraph. Since that Report was written an extensive motor garage has been erected; some secondary schools have been built (if that is the right expression); an artificial manure factory has been completed and the manager's residence is being erected; two villas are nearing completion;—*and so are two of your eight cottages for the working class!!*

APPENDICES.

HOUSING CONDITIONS.

1.—General.

(1)	Estimated population	...	...	4,926
(2)	General death-rate	...	...	12·7
(3)	Death-rate from Tuberculosis...	1	per 1,000	
(4)	Infantile Mortality	...	7·36	per 1,000
(5)	Number of Dwelling Houses of all classes			960
(6)	Number of Working Class Dwelling Houses			600
(7)	Number of New Working Class Houses erected			nil

2.—Unfit Dwelling Houses.

(I) INSPECTION.

(1)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	15
(2)	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910...				15
(3)	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...			1
(4)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	3

(II) REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

	Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	3
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(III) ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

A *Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.*

(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	nil
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(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit-					
(a) by owners		nil
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners					nil
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	...	...	...	..	nil

B. *Proceedings under Public Health Acts.*

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	...	3
(2) Number of Dwelling houses in which defects were remedied—					
(a) by owners	...	...	...		3
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners					nil

C. *Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909*

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	...	...		1
(2) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...		1
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit...	...	...		nil
(4) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...		nil
(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	...		nil

WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

The Workshops and Bakeries on the register for the year numbered 27.

These have been periodically inspected, the defects found being as follows :—

Defective Sanitary Accommodation	3
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These defects were all remedied without reference to H.M. Inspector, and no prosecutions were necessary.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Obediently yours,

W. J. GILPIN.



